

JANUARY 12-19 JANVIER 1995
VOL 84 . NO 46

THE MCGILL DAILY

PEN PALS SINCE 1911

culture



FRONT PAGE
OR BUST

Yeah—
well there was
a gay bar
blown up

THE RETURN OF THE
SPOKEN WORD!

SEE PAGES 6-7
on a "raggot assault"
but JFK Jr.



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Shrinking from morality

An opinion submitted by DOMINIQUE NOUVET

In the course of a recent argument, I was accused of having no coherent ethical system, and of being unable to defend any of my beliefs logically. While I interpreted this as an unwarranted and unfounded attack, there lingered in my mind the knowledge that it is indeed extremely difficult to feel that one's value system is impermeable to all of the present day moral dilemmas. I cannot help but feel that humans are being faced with increasingly challenging moral questions.

Looking back four centuries, we witnessed a time when Bartolomé de las Casas, a Latin American missionary, partook in the then-controversial debate over slavery, of whether or not the practice was morally acceptable. More recently, women in Canada were finally granted the right to vote.

Now, the answers to these moral questions seem obvious, and the issues have instead been replaced by a wave of new debates: genetic engineering, the information highway, and Canada's obligations towards other nations all lead to puzzling potential problems which I personally find dumbfounding.

In fact, it has now become a regular occurrence for me to hear a radio report, or read a story in the paper, and subsequently become 'mentally paralysed', unable to form my own opinion or even muster up the courage to begin a reasoning process.

This moral paralysis was most pronounced during media coverage of the recent Vladimir mercy killing case in Saskatchewan. I listened to innumerable interviews and commentaries, and invariably found myself shaking my head in utter bewilderment, unable to form a solid opinion or to put any order to my thoughts.

Perhaps it is simply a question of mental laziness, similar to the situation which arises when you look at a messy room and cannot find the energy to begin cleaning it. Indeed, I cannot help but think that I possess the necessary logic skills and basic values to formulate an opinion on issues such as mercy killing or euthanasia.

Nevertheless, I am also convinced that humans today are being faced with problems of greater moral complexity: as the pace of life continues to accelerate, we are given less and less time to evaluate the developments in science and technology, and as nations become more closely inter-linked, the repercussions of any given decision are felt by an ever larger portion of the globe.

What worries me is the thought that perhaps we are falling behind in our development of an ethical system; the fact that even the topic of homosexuality remains a moral problem for a significant portion of Canadians is evidence of our sluggish pace in incorporating new issues into our value system.

As Descartes wrote, "l'indifférence est le plus bas degrés de la liberté." While this philosopher was never confronted by many of today's dilemmas, the validity of these words remains unchanged. Humans will always have a fundamental duty to morally assess the world which they themselves have created. I hope that I am mistaken in feeling that we are failing to keep up with our own "progress".



LETTERS

Bugger off?

To the Daily,

On January 9, 1995, Patrice DelaRochelière pleads, "Ms. Newton and Ms. Payne, do not make this university newspaper, which is supposed to be the epitome of liberalism and objectivity, into a propagandist leaflet. The students you represent deserve that much."

Our good friend, Melanie Newton (I presume), asked her kindly in an editor's note, "Please read the Statement of Principles of the McGill Daily on this page." (It's true. They really were there.)

My question is whether the subtext of this Ed note was "please read the Statement of Principles and you'll find that we are, in fact, being the epitome of liberalism and objectivity," or whether it was "please read the Statement of Principles sucker, and you'll find that we don't have to be liberal or objective. Bugger off and kiss your \$6.70 goodbye."

While you're thinking of an answer to this, I'll also point out that you missed an important article in your Statement of Principles; the one about this paper being as "soft and absorbent as allowable by government regulations..."

Ian R. Hay
U3 Arts

Logic or emotionalism?

Informal logic

To the Daily,

It is embarrassing that many students graduate from McGill unable to construct a sound argument. Living in a quagmire of subjectivism, students have become cynical and lazy, using emotion to bolster their positions. This trend of intellectual abdication, for example, can be seen in A. Shafaar's letter (Jan. 9) criticizing a statement I had made.

Shafaar confidently dismisses my claim that the Daily engages in Israel-bashing as "nonsense." But he never says what makes it so; therefore, he begs the question. Perhaps, he thinks that, by recording a litany of Israeli sins, he has discredited my argument. If he does, he is sadly mistaken.

Stumbling forward, Shafaar suggests that Zionists like myself cry "anti-Semite" to silence opponents of Israel. Readers interested in the truth will discover that I've never done anything of the sort, nor would any mainstream Zionist organization. Hence, his presentation of my side is a straw man argument. Incidentally, Shafaar's dichotomy of censorship versus the status quo is a false dilemma: there's always the middle road of balanced journalism.

Shafaar accuses Israel of hardly being "a light onto the nations". However, Israel's supposed failure to live up to its ideals does not invalidate Zionism as a political ideology. Folks, we've been treated to a tu quo que fallacy.

Slightly paranoid, Shafaar ends his letter by insinuating that the pro-Israel lobby would kill any US senator "who

dared to tell the truth." This quaint form of pseudo-reasoning is called "poisoning the well"—casting aspersions instead of addressing issues.

Obviously, my letter isn't really about Israel, it's about higher education. We need a mandatory course in informal logic at McGill as Shafaar's letter clearly demonstrates. Only after we learned the difference between logic and emotionalism can we call ourselves educated.

P.S. A. Shafaar, we could discuss these issues rationally instead of launching wasteful recriminations. Contact me through the UZC-M mailbox.

Erik Schechter
Arts U2

Talk to me

To the Daily,

This letter is in response to your recent article criticizing a proposal which is being presented to Student's Council this Thursday, January 12th. Let me remind you that all undergraduate students are members of the Students' Society and thus are entitled to speaking rights at all Council meetings. In fact, Council has yet to go into confidential session all year. I would encourage anyone to come to Council in order to express their views on this proposal or anything else. Even if you do not have anything to say or have no opinion on what is being discussed, I would encourage you to pop by any Council meeting and find out what it's really all about. They occur every second Thursday evening starting at 6:00pm in the University Centre. After all, you are all shareholders of this organization.

I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank members of the McGill Daily staff for actually covering this issue because it certainly is an important one and affects all students. It's nice to see a campus publication which is funded by student fees, actually covering a student issue which is being discussed by Council, it certainly helps in informing our constituents. I hope that perhaps a precedent has been set here and perhaps the Daily will even see to it that they have a reporter present at all future meetings, as opposed to the last 3 meetings this past semester when such important issues were being discussed.

And if you or anyone you know should have any questions, comments, concerns, suggestions, input or if you would like to get involved in any way, please call me at 398-6801, or fax me at 398-7490, or even e-mail me at president@stusoc.1an.mcgill. I would be more than happy to meet with you or anyone else you may know. My door is always open.

Thanks for your time,
Sevag Yeghoyan
President SSMU

Ed. note The Daily has a regular SSMU reporter at all Council meetings. We even have backup staff.

The Daily welcomes all letters under 300 words. Add your name, program, year and phone number. Anonymity can be provided; talk to an editor beforehand. We print all letters provided they are not racist, sexist, homophobic or slanderous. Opinions can be expressed in the form of a Hyde Park, no more than 500 words.

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The Canadian Foreign Policy Review chooses trade over human rights.

BY ANUP GREWAL

LAST NOVEMBER, Team Canada sought the treasures of investment in China without batting an eye in the direction of human rights abuses. One senior foreign affairs official defended the actions of Chrétien and his troupe, saying, "We do not practise megaphone diplomacy, but we do not practise doormat diplomacy either". The question was, what does Canada then practise?

The answer came on November 15 in the form of a document entitled "Canada's Foreign Policy" put out by the Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy. The committee compiled the report after a series of "public consultations" throughout Canada.

Rather than providing clear answers to questions about the direction of Canada's foreign policy, the document is evasive. Erol Mendes, director of The Human Rights Research and Education Centre says that "[the report] is a good start... but it is urgent for the government to put flesh on the bare bones approach."

THERE ARE THREE underlying themes in the report. The first is upholding "Canadian Values" which are defined as "nurturing dialogue and compromise, promoting democracy, human rights, economic and social justice, caring for the environment, safeguarding peace and easing poverty." The second is that Canadians want greater economic prosperity. The third is recognition of the fiscal restraints and therefore the need to prioritise and adjust the existing aid projects.

These themes are discussed in the context of security, international trade, international development assistance, culture and education, sustainable development and Canada's regional priorities.

The report advocates continued support from multilateral institutions such as the UN, NATO, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

It also suggests reforms to UN military operations, especially the build-up of a UN force

and a decrease in the number of areas where the UN is involved.

The Committee writes that due to the fiscal restraints, "the primary international role of Canadian forces should be to support peacekeeping operations", but that this should be done based on "a selective approach based on Canadian interests and skills". What exactly these interests and skills are, is not clear in the report.

HOWEVER, THE REPORT suggests that due to "the growing economic importance of Asia", there should be a "greater security emphasis for the Asia-Pacific region" in order to "ensure political and economic stability."

This emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region becomes more evident in the report's suggestions about the direction of international trade. The report says that "Canada will continue to fall behind its competitors [if it does not begin to] build...rewarding trade and investment links with the new trading giants".

The report recommends that "the government pursue trade

that "Canadians [have a] deep commitment to Human Rights", yet it does not seem to want Canada to take an initiative in promoting these rights with those nations it trades with.

The Committee recommends that "trade sanctions may be effective in certain cases against serious abuses, but only when applied by a decisive majority of the trading partners".

Essentially then, Canada will follow the actions of its allies, without taking the courage to try to influence them instead.

Clyde Sanger, director of Communications at The North-South Institute says "there are some countries Canada just should not trade in, like Burma". Here Canadian traders can have an affect on their own.

The report goes on to claim

or can, just "enforce so called enlightened policies such as not using child labour or prison labour, [to create] a percolating effect [that influences the country that abuses human rights]".

Mendes calls this "the trickle down perspective". He suggests that an alternative to this is the "trickle up" perspective in which Canada "helps to build a strong civil society and promote institutions that allow respect for Human Rights to grow."

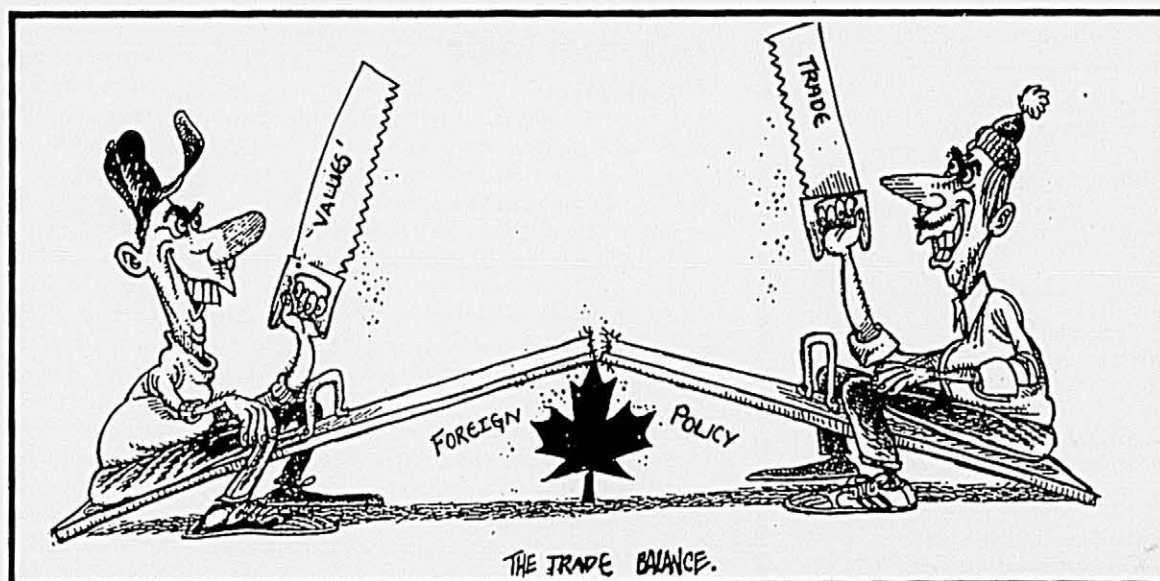
Mendes points out that the report fails to integrate Canadian economic interests with the values it wants to uphold. At the same time he adds, "maybe it is too unrealistic to expect that". With this fundamental contradiction, the "Canadian Values" are a nice token effort that really do not mean anything and

Gerald Schmitz, a researcher for the Review, admitted that "what was in the report about trade and human rights was quite perfunctory".

THE REVIEW attempts to make up for the lack of commitment to the "Canadian Values" and especially human rights in the sections on international development assistance and sustainable development. Here the report emphasises Canada's "responsibility to assist the poor".

It recommends a series of reforms to the much criticised Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The reforms begin with the need for a clear mandate that focuses on providing aid for "basic human needs, Human Rights, democ-

The report says Canadians have a deep commitment to human rights, but it doesn't seem to want us to take an initiative in promoting these rights with our trading partners.



racy and good governance, women, the environment, the private sector and exchange programs".

The review also suggests decreasing the number of areas receiving aid by maintaining that which goes to Africa, decreasing the amount to Asia, and "refocusing" in Latin America.

According to the committee, CIDA should no longer support harmful structural adjustment programs by the International Monetary Fund and should stop "confusing trade interests and developmental interests."

At the same time, the report advocates that CIDA "encourage" aid recipients involved in private sector programs to have "trade relations with Canada. The difference between the old and the new is not clear.

Again the review outlines a vague approach to actions it will take against repressive governments. "In the case of countries whose governments are responsible for serious violations of human rights, Canada should work

opportunities actively in the Asia-Pacific region".

Critics of the report see this fear of Canada's inability to compete in the world market coupled with the race to invest in the markets of the Asian dragons as a disconcerting aspect of the report.

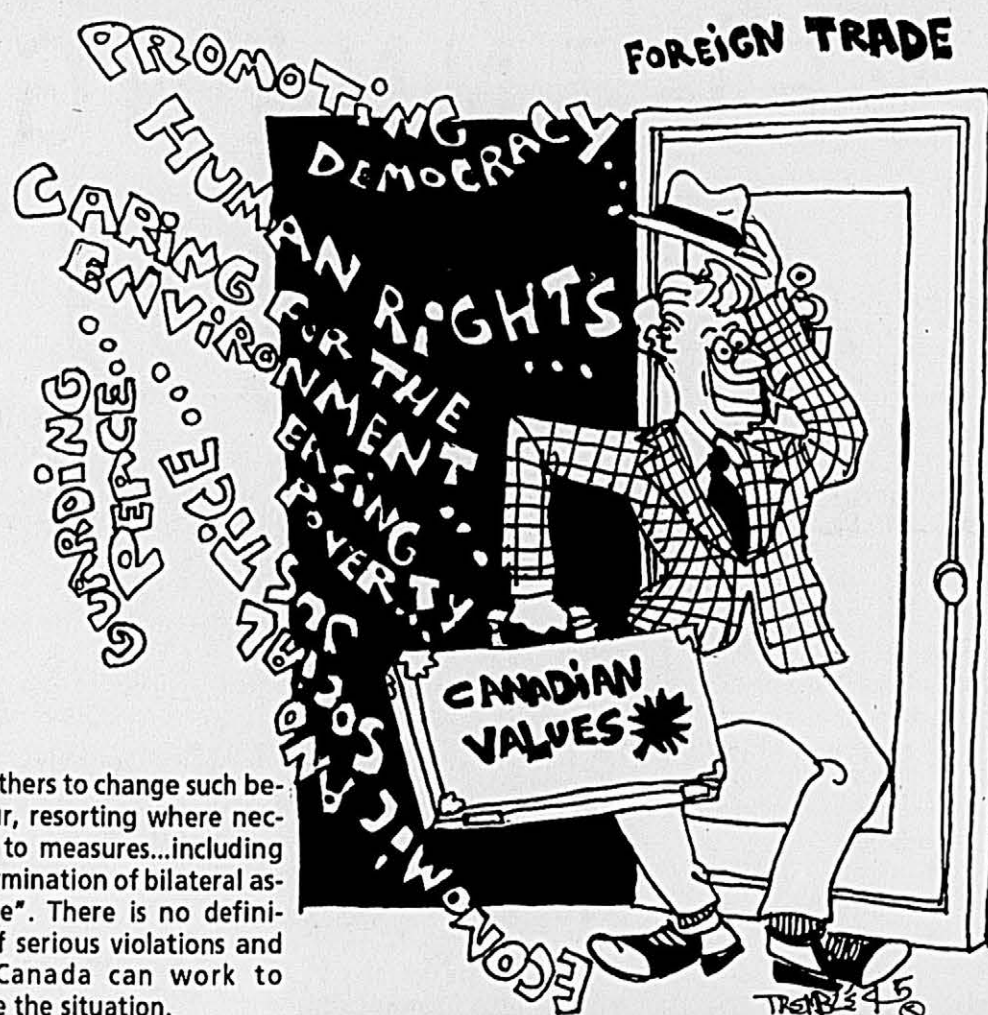
By focusing on the race for trade opportunities, the report contradicts its stand on linking Human Rights to trade. It says

that "Canada can influence other countries by making our views known in a clear and frank way through dialogue". It says Canada should "be consistent in the application of our principles".

Both Mendes and Sanger are skeptical of this line of argument. Sanger says that traders are there to make profits for their own companies and we cannot believe that traders will

only work to confuse the policy.

For the moment, the committee squirms by a real commitment by saying that "the government of Canada should use whatever channels may be most effective to protest the abuses of human rights, labour standards and environmental protection, whenever they occur, and should work closely with...[our] partners and the multilateral trading system".



DAILY GRAPHIC BY JANE TREMBLAY

with others to change such behaviour, resorting where necessary to measures...including the termination of bilateral assistance". There is no definition of serious violations and how Canada can work to change the situation.

The report's handling of the crucial question of Human Rights leaves many unsatisfied. Sanger comments that the report dilutes the impact of the issue of Human Rights because "it uses the argument that [Human Rights] is an issue that flows through all subjects and needs to be addressed in all parts of the report... A little bit in trade, a little bit in aid, without giving the issue its own section which is important to do".

The Bloc Québécois also attacked the Committee for "subordinating human rights to mercantilism".

The debate on Human Rights becomes blatant when viewed in light of the silence of Team Canada on the whole issue. To what extent did the lucrative trip to China reflect the direction of Canada's foreign policy?

One wonders if the "constructive dialogue" approach the report is advocating was represented by Chrétien's decision to "bring it [human rights violations in China] up in private"?

Sanger says that Team Canada went too far. "Of course we've got to increase our trading partners but if one forgets about [everything] except the most prosperous regions, then we are not being very responsible".

The report ends with a section on how to promote Canadian culture and learning. The committee wants the government to treat "culture, scientific and educational affairs... as a fundamental dimension of Canadian foreign policy". It writes that educational exchanges and Canadian studies abroad ought to be promoted.

In light of the rigorous cuts proposed to domestic educational institutions, how does the committee expect the government to finance such a program? This is another one of many points on which the report remains evasive.

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IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD

Too often poetry is the domain of stuffy academics. It is trapped in universities to be studied by "scholars" and is written in language that most people don't speak.

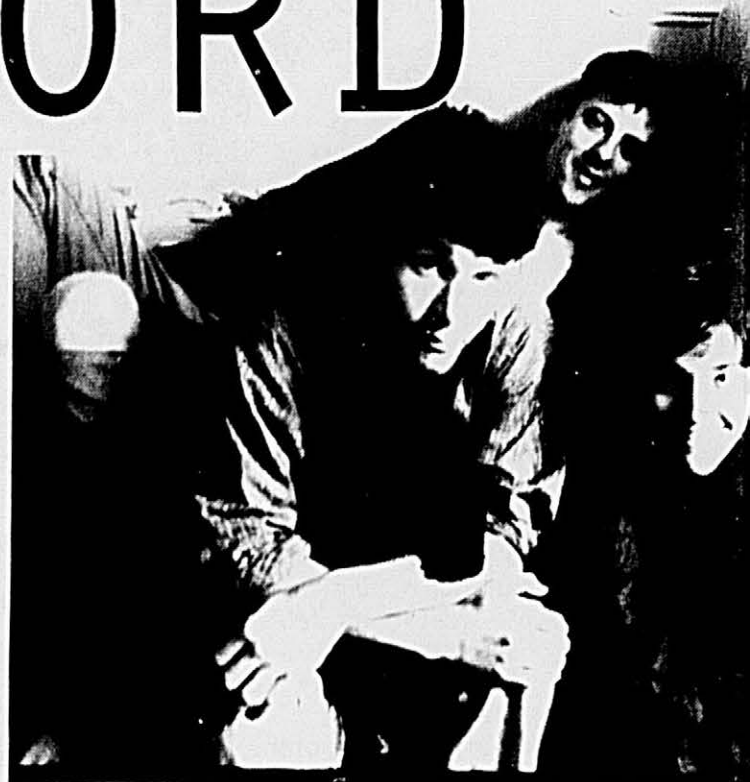


PHOTO: THE FLUFFY PAGAN ECHOES
MCGRAIL, VICTORIA STANTON, RAN

regie cabico CHECK ONE

*The government asks me to "check one" if I want money.
I just laugh in their face and say,
"How can you ask me to be one race?"*

I stand proudly before you a fierce Filipino
who knows how to belt hard-gospel songs
played to African drums at a Catholic mass—
and loving the music to suffering beats,
and lashes from men's eyes on the capitol streets—

South-East D.C., with its sleepy crime,
my mother nursed patients from seven to nine,
patients gray from the railroad
riding past civil rights

I walked their tracks when I entertained
them at the chapel and made their canes pillars
of percussion to my heavy gospel—
my comedy out-loud, laughing about, our shared,
stolen experiences of the South.

Would it surprise you if I told you my blood
was delivered from North off Portuguese vessels
who gave me spiritual stones and the turn in my eyes—
my father's name when they conquered the Pacific Isles.

But there is poetry that does not conform to this stereotype: dub, rap and broader category known as spoken word. Spoken word used to be associated with "beat poets", berets and smokey New York coffee houses, but now MTV is doing broadcasts from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe in New York's Lower East Side. MuchMusic has followed suit with its word *Up* series of spoken word videos. PBS recently broadcast a spoken word series called *Words In Your Face*. The list is growing as more and more writers bring their work from the streets to the cafés to the video generation.

BEYOND THE BEATS

Part of the reason for the success of spoken word is that it uses language people understand. "People can relate to what I say and how I say it. They don't need a Ph.D. to understand it," says New York based poet Jamal Mumar. Mumar works with the St. Marks Poetry Project, held in St. Mark's Church, the same place where "happenings" went on in the 1960s.

According to Mumar, spoken word "gives people the language to express things that are important to them." He adds that rap and dub have amplified previously unheard voices for a long time, but spoken word is catching on now.

Mumar explained how a lot of people attribute this type of attitude toward poetry to the "beat poets" of the '50s and '60s but spoken word has taken directions that the beats couldn't have imagined.

The St. Mark's Poetry Project and the Nuyorican Poetry Café provide a forum for voices which had previously been silenced. These poets come from diverse backgrounds, exploding the simplistic black/white dichotomy of the beats. Notes Mumar,

"Ginsberg, Kerouac, Burroughs were important but they had no clue. The diversity of poets on the

scene these days is something that they could never have dreamed of. I've been to readings where people literally come in off the street and just recite off the top of their head, just regular people."

PERFORMANCE POETRY

"Poetry is no longer an exhibit in a Dust Museum" writes Bob Holman in his invocation of *Aloud: Voices From The Nuyorican Poets Café*, a compilation of work performed at the Café. The whole purpose of spoken word is to present poetry as something to be heard and not just read.

According to Ran of Montréal's word circus troupe Fluffy Pagan Echoes (FPE) spoken word "takes it off the page and puts it in your ear."

Spoken word draws in its audience through a combination of theatre and poetry. "Increasingly we live in an oral culture, everyone bitches about kids watching too much television, but it seems that the younger the audience, the more enthusiasm they have," says Scott Duncan also of FPE, adding, "There is a generation difference and the television generation really likes us, we've been really popular among CEGEP students."

According to Mumar, "those elements that are suppressed normally are celebrated in poetry. And now they are more than just artistically recognized but are becoming commercially successful also."

This past summer Regie Cabico, a gay Filipino poet, was one of a number of poets who toured with Lollapalooza. MuchMusic recently showed a video called,

*My hair is black and thick as "negrito," growing abundant
as "sampaguita"—flowers defying civilization
like pilipino pygmies that dance in the mountain.*

*I could give you an epic about my ways of life or my look
and you want me to fill it in "one square box."
From what integer or shape do you count existing identities,
grant loans for the mind, or crayola white census sheets—
There's no "one kind" to fill for anyone.*

*You tell me who I am, what gets the most money
and I'll sing that song like a one-man caravan.
I know arias from Naples, Tunis, and Accra—
lullabies from welfare, food-stamps, and nature*

*and you want me to sing one song?
I have danced jigs with Jim Crow and shuffled my hips
to a sonic guitar of Clapton and Hendrix,
waltzed with dead lovers, skipped to bamboo sticks,
battered kabuki and mimed cathacali
arrivederci-a-rhumba and tapped Tin Pan Alley—
and you want me to dance the Bhagavad Gita
on a box too small for a thumbelina-thin diva?*

*I'll check "other," say artist,
that's who I am: a poet, a writer, a lover of man.*



(LEFT TO RIGHT: SCOTT DUNCAN, JUSTIN ELFASSY AND VINCENT TINGUELY.

FRONT PAGE OR BUST

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April 25
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the police
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was on the front page
for crying
about a 600 million dollar fine
(poor baby!)
And a black man
was killed
while surrendering
to two white
police officers
who were suspended
with pay pending
an investigation
but Donald Trump
in on the front page
as the man who can
buy his cake
and eat it too
And movie stars
continue to take precedence
over the homeless
and politicians'
personal lives
continue
to take precedence
over justice
And names like
Elizabeth Taylor
Mike Milken
JFK Jr.
and Donald Trump
are just
fancy names
for irrelevance

"What does a Lesbian look like" on its *Word Up* spot, and last year, musician-poet Gil Scott-Heron played at Montréal's Club Soda.

Spoken word poetry has also forged a space for itself in commercial media forms outside of the realm of strictly live performance. Poets Reg E. Gaines and Maggie Estep both have their own CDs and *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Café* was the 1994 American Book Award winner. There is also talk of an emerging record label for poets in New York City.

This growth in recognition for spoken word poetry has been mirrored in Canada. Montréal in particular is beginning to emerge with its own scene.

Bistro 4 and the Phoenix Café hold regular poetry readings. "People used to go to poetry readings and imagine it was just a bunch of stuffed turtlesnecks. We try to get the audience involved and reacting," explains Ran of Fluffy Pagan Echoes.

DIVERSITY IN VOICES

These readings do not always reflect the diversity of our society. The recent rise of dub poets Clifton Joseph and Lillian Allen point to the possibility of a more varied scene in Canada, but there is still a long way to go.

"There have been a number of dub poetry readings, but they only happen about four or five times a year, usually during Black History Month and during the summer and a few other times," observes Montreal dub poet Dee Smith, adding, there is a growing interest in dub, and the supporters are out there."

A few years ago, Amuna Baraka, Michael Pintard, Ted Runcie, Dee Smith and a few others were part of a group known as Diasporic African Poets.

According to Pat Dillon, station manager of CKUT, "DAP was formed at a point in time when student activism was high, Marcelus Francois and Presley Leslie had just been killed by the police."

Dee Smith comments, "dub opens up peoples eyes to certain social and political issues, it encourages young people to write and do things in their own style."

These words reflect on the potential for all poetry — dub, rap and spoken word — to demolish the elitism that once characterized poetry and to bring about radical democratization of the form.

SPOKEN WORD LISTINGS IN MONTREAL

PERFORMANCE

- *Enough Said* hosted by Lee Gotham. Open mike and featured performers Mondays at Bistro 4, beginning at 21h. This week: bill bisset.
- *Fuzzy Pagan Echoes* fourth Wednesday of every month at Café Galerie Phoenix
- *DESA* Department of English Students Association holds two readings each year at Thomson House

RADIO

- *Twisting Tongues* (CKUT Mondays 11h30-12h) women of colour on international issues.
- *Literature Montreal* (CKUT Fridays 18-19h)
- *Anything Goes* (CKUT alternate Saturdays 10-10h30) by kids, for kids and the young at heart
- *Dromotext* (CKUT Thursdays 20-21h) spoken word heaven and hell
- *Kultur Javex* (CKUT Tuesdays 18h)

RECORDINGS

- *Wining, Dining and Drilling* by Ian Stephens. investigates the urban queer scene. available from: En Guard Records, 1671 St. Hubert, Montreal, Que. H2L 3Z1.
- *Multiple Comings* by Michael Pintard. (aka X) dub poetry on cassette.

PUBLICATIONS

- *Blazin' Auralities* an irregular zine which reviews spoken word recordings. available from: Breakin' Tonalities, c/o Fortner Anderson, 4083 Clark, Montreal, Que, H2W 1X1.
- *Ga Press Oralpalooza* anthology, available at The Word 469 Milton.
- *Episode One, A Word Circus*, selected pieces as performed by Fluffy Pagan Echoes. available from Egg Sandwich Press, 4821 Jeanne-Mance, Montreal, Que. H2V 4J6
- *Diasporic African Poets* publication slated for Fall 1995.
- *Aloud, Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café*. edited by Miguel Algarin and Bob Holman.

WORKSHOPS

- *Action Poetry* at The Banff Centre for the Arts. in conjunction with Word of Mouth CDs. Info: tel(403)762-6396, fax(403)762-6345

STORY AND LISTINGS BY AHMER QADEER AND JULIE CRYSLER

ON THIS PAGE: "CHECK ONE" BY REGIE CABICO AND "FRONT PAGE OR BUST" BY NICOLE BREEDLOVE. PUBLISHED IN *ALOUD: VOICES FROM THE NUYORICAN POETS CAFÉ*. HENRY HOLT:1994.

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Amid all the talk of 'globalization' and a 'new information society' there remain those jobs whose conditions have barely changed since the turn of the century.

Long hours, dangerous work, little legal protection and low pay. These conditions are not relegated to the so-called Third World, but are a reality in the agricultural industry of this country.

Provincial and federal governments have ensured access to cheap labour for the agricultural industry, and where it wasn't available it has been imported.

Every year almost 13 000 people are brought from Mexico and the Caribbean to be employed as seasonal agricultural labour in Canada. With proper management, the program could benefit both farmers and those who come to work.

For the workers it is an opportunity for higher wages and a chance to buy goods they can't get in their home countries. For farmers, the offshore workers provide steady employment for difficult work that many Canadians won't do.

The workers have rights guaranteeing them one day off for every six days worked and not requiring them to work more than eight hours a day. There are also regulations intended to ensure fair payment.

That is how the system should work. But, often its operation is very different.

Workers have very little opportunity to appeal labour

rights violations on the part of the farmers. Most claims are made through their consulates. Since most workers are on the farm during their consulates' hours of operation, the workers have little means of recourse.

One of the clearest violations of workers' rights is the practice of withholding a percentage of Caribbean workers' pay. Farmers fear their Caribbean workers will go "AWOL" for this reason, they withhold pay until the workers return to their home country, where they receive the balance of their pay. This practice is illegal.

Even more disturbing is the fact that workers are not always paid their proper wages. In one incident on a farm near St. Catharines, Ontario two Mexican workers were losing over \$300 in unpaid wages over two-week pay periods.

When they complained about it to their liaison officer,

Ramón Moreno, he said he would look into it. They never received their wages and neither returned to the offshore labour program the next season. Moreno was not available for comment.

Many of the workers are afraid to report violations for fear they will not be allowed to return to work the next season.

There are farms that function well. Canadian photographer Vince Pietropaulo, whose most acclaimed exhibit has been on the life of migrant workers, noted in a recent *This* magazine interview that farmers sometimes request individual workers, and often work alongside their employees.

There are a number of laws regulating the hiring of offshore labour. Farmers are not allowed to hire offshore workers without first offering the positions to Canadians. However, the low wages, the difficult labour, and the necessity of living on a farm all make the job unappealing.

British Columbia & labour contractors

Unlike Ontario, Québec and Nova Scotia, British Columbia has no offshore labour. This is because of steady access to cheap labour through recent immigrants. In British Columbia the farmworkers are almost exclusively South Asian, mostly of Punjabi origin.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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Higher learning

John Singleton gives a taste of identity and power in the '90s.

BY LLOYD KENNITH

To describe John Singleton's 'Higher Learning' as a good film would not do it justice. Unlike Poetic Justice, Singleton's last film, which seems to have disappointed everyone, if his most recent offering had to be described in one word "powerful" would probably be the most appropriate.

Singleton manages to address, albeit superficially, some of the most pressing issues of today, without providing cliché solutions to complex issues.

The film takes place on Columbus U, a fictional university in California. But to say that the film is about university life in America would be a grave mistake. Columbus U is a microcosm of American society, and to a lesser degree, much of the world in which we live. Naturally, it is impossible to describe America in such limited space and do justice to the myriad of issues and problems that permeate that society, and our own. It cannot be done in a review and

Singleton does not attempt to do so in the film.

What he does is bring these issues to the dinner table. He does not tell the audience what to think but presents them with

he gives each a certain amount of respect.

He contrasts various groups on the campus yet shows how they are all interconnected. One scene stands out in particular at the beginning in which members of a predominantly white fraternity are shown partying and drinking with "white music" in the background. Then, suddenly, the scene switches to a "black party".

There is a sense of tension which pervades the film. On two occasions, a black character is arrested by the police when he in fact was the victim. Yet, by not making the issues black and white (there are blacks and whites rooming together, genuinely getting along) Singleton seems to offer a glimmer of hope that, saying that between these two "extremes" there is and can be room where very different people can meet.

Perhaps one of the few faults with the film is the way it ends. The word "unlearn" is displayed on the screen in front of an American flag. In that context the word's meaning is obviously open to interpretation.

One possible reading is that through education people can rid themselves of their prejudic-

es and ignorance, which is often ingrained in so many from birth. If this is a valid reading of Singleton's use of the word then it would appear that Singleton believes that discrimination and exploitation are merely due to the ignorance of the perpetrators.

In one scene, a professor played by actor Lawrence (Larry) Fishburne, asks one of the black characters in the film whether he believes that there is someone out there deliberately pushing the buttons in order to oppress black people in the United States. The professor asks the question cynically, suggesting such a thing is ridiculous. It is certainly true that we too often focus on "the powers that be" at the expense of seizing the initiative.

And this seems to be the point that Singleton is making through the professor. However, "unlearn" seems to ignore the fact that so much of the mess that we see in Western society today is the product of people who know exactly what they are doing and are bent on keeping economic and political power in their hands.

This is not to say that the situation is hopeless and Singleton, who wrote, directed and produced the film, does not give that impression. But he seems to imply that through education many of the problems in American society will go away.

Singleton presents the audience with a menu of America and leaves the audience to discuss it

a menu of America and leaves the audience to discuss it.

Singleton grapples with a number of issues including race relations and racism, classism, gender issues, sexuality, and identity. Although these issues do not get equal play in the film,

Filipinos gear up to tackle

AIDS

BY MAE-ANNE LLANZA

Manila — Ask most Filipinos if they have heard of HIV/AIDS, and you get a resounding yes. Probe a bit and you find they do not really understand the issue.

In fact, a barrage of information seems to have increased the stigma attached to the disease and to people living high-risk lifestyles. In 1991, the Remedios AIDS Foundation Inc. (RAF) opened an AIDS information center, realizing the gravity of the disease. RAF Executive Director Marianna Balquiedra observed, "Sometimes, when we sit in the lounge, we can see the reactions on the faces of passersby. They seem to say: 'Oh, so that's what people with AIDS look like.'"

RAF's biggest and most popular program is the AIDS hotline. There are an average of 40 to 50 calls a day. Most callers are 16 to 25 years old but some are people as old as 60 or as young as curious nine-year-olds. Inquiries from the provinces come in too, along with a few overseas calls from contract workers.

The hotline has counselors who have undergone extensive training at workshops on HIV/AIDS information and counseling techniques. The hotline also provides referrals to specialized agencies and accredited hospitals and clinics, especially for HIV testing and STD treatment.

A special feature is the women's hotline, giving women the option to talk to a woman counselor. Every call is treated with confidentiality. Apart from this facility, the organization claims to be gender neutral.

"A lot of people still believe they won't get AIDS," Balquiedra comments. "Most callers and their questions are about transmission but not prevention."

According to their 1993 callers' profile, consistent condom usage among callers reaches only up to ten percent. This confirms that people know the issue but do not fully comprehend the urgency of prevention.

RAF believes HIV/AIDS education should be integrated in the school curriculum, within the context of sex education. They feel that communication campaigns on HIV/AIDS should be part of an information delivery system integrated with other developmental and social programs.

source: Womens News Service

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McGill Students & Staff (with valid ID): \$4.00 per day, 4 or more consecutive days, \$3.50 per day. **General Public:** \$5.00 per day, or \$4.25 per day for 4 or more consecutive days. Extra charges may apply, and prices do not include applicable GST (7%) or PST (6.5%). Full payment should accompany your advertising order and may be made by cash or by personal cheque (for amounts over \$20 only). For more information, please visit our office in person or call 398-6790 - WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE.

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• MARS Access

From December 24th - January 15th (inclusive) access to MARS during the evening will be extended to 10 p.m.

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• **Christian Belief and the New Catholic Catechism** present "The Birth of the Messiah". 19h30 Newman Centre, 3484 Peel. For more info call 398-4106.

• **McGill Review of Interdisciplinary Arts** is accepting undergraduate submissions on interdisciplinary topics until January 17, 1995. Leave 3 copies of the unstapled graded paper, with your name and phone number, in the Review's box at the Leacock porter's office. Info: 844-4907.

FRIDAY THE 13TH

• **McGill World Invitational Debating Tournament** invites students and alumni to judge on Friday, Jan. 13 or Saturday, Jan. 14. No previous experience necessary. Judging seminars given the day of the tournament. Info: 398-6824.

MONDAY THE 16TH

• **Project Zora and The McGill Refugee Research Project** present a colloquium and public meeting featuring Kris-

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tina Jeric, witness to the war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. 19h30 at Fulford Hall, Place de la Cathedrale, 1444 Union Ave, (Metro McGill). Info: 485-2819.

• **McGill Faculty of Law** presents The Hon. Mr Justice Frank Iacobucci, Supreme Court of Canada. Topic: "Independence and Accountability of the Three Legal Pillars" 12h30, Moot Court, 3644 Peel Street.

• **WUSC McGill** meeting to plan for Québec-wide symposium "Access to Education—from Rights to Reality". New members always welcome. 18h in Hitchfield Library Seminar Room, 5th Floor Burnside. Info: 284-0609. Information also available on overseas opportunities.

TUESDAY THE 17TH

• **Jewish Women's Project** presents feminist Tu B'Shevat Sed. 19h, Hillel House, 3460 Stanley St. Info: call Tziona: 369-1378, Hillel: 845-9171, or e-mail Rebecca at rmargoli@fac.1an.mcgill.ca

• **Seydou Zon of the group Farafina and Naby Camara** at Club Balatou 4372 St Laurent. Jan. 17 and 18, at 22h. Tickets \$5. Info: 845-5447.

ONGOING

• **Centre for AIDS Services Montreal (Women)** offers HIV/AIDS Education/Prevention Workshops for Women, Sexuality and Self-Esteem. Every Saturday and Sunday from 10h to 15h until the end of January. Free. Info: 989-7997.

• **Centre For Literacy** offers workshops in "Computers and writing in educational settings". No computer experience necessary. January 28, 1995, 9h to 16h. Limited registration. Fee includes materials and lunch. Info: 931-8731, local 1415.

• **Free meditation courses** offered by the students of Sri Chinmoy. Info: 845-1837 (English) and 489-5692 (French).

• **Latitudes—the McGill Journal for Developing Areas Studies** is accepting interdisciplinary undergraduate papers relating to developing area issues. Submit two copies to Latitudes' mailbox, Shatner Bldg across from SSMU desk. Info: 279-5413. Deadline: Jan. 31, 1995

• **Jerzy Warzecha** will present a painting and mixed media art exhibition from Jan. 9 to Jan. 27 1995 at the McGill Faculty Club.

Picking your fruit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Labour-contractors, who are frequently more established Punjabi immigrants, pick up the farm labour and transport them to their places of employment. Within this system, the farmer deals with the labour-contractor not the worker.

cine primarily for economic reasons," says Basran, "people can't afford to pay union dues and those that sign union cards are blacklisted by farmers and can't find jobs."

Despite the decline in numbers the CFU has remained very active. In 1993 they successfully helped pass the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. This was the first piece of legislation that protected workers against pesticides.

In 1992 the CFU was involved in a tripartite commission that helped develop the Employment Standards Act. This established a fair minimum wage and a maximum work week.

Despite these gains, the labour-contract system is still in effect. It continues to underpay and overwork farmworkers, expose them to dangerous chemicals and intimidate those who speak out.

"We live in a so-called First World country and the conditions that they are subjected to are conditions comparable to those in the so-called Third World," said Basran.

"people can't afford to pay union dues and those that sign union cards are blacklisted by farmers and can't find jobs."

"We estimate that 80-90 percent of the exploitation that goes on occurs at this level," explained Satvinder Basran of the Canadian Farmworkers Union (CFU).

The CFU has been defending British Columbia farmworkers since 1978. The union received certification in 1980. Membership peaked in the mid-1980's with over 1400 members. Now that number has shrunk to just over 400.

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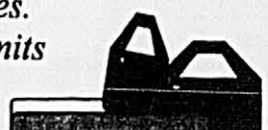
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